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September 18, 2006

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H. 
Director and Health Officer

SUBJECT: **UPDATE ON CULTURAL FOOD PREPARATION LAWS**

On October 18, 2005, the Board of Supervisors approved a motion by Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich directing the Director of Public Health to convene meetings with restaurant groups representing various Asian cuisines. This is to provide an update on our progress since the June 27, 2006 status report.

Determine additional training needs on the recent State law changes concerning food temperature

Status – The Environmental Health (EH), Consultation and Technical Services (CTS) unit has received and reviewed completed needs assessment surveys from restaurateurs in the Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese restaurant communities. A total of 293 Chinese, 93 Filipino, 93 Korean, and 97 Vietnamese surveys were sent to respective restaurateurs. Of those surveys mailed, only a limited number of completed surveys were returned: 19 Chinese, 7 Filipino, 22 Korean, and 2 Vietnamese. The limited number of responses was consistent with the response to the surveys which were distributed and received from trade organizations representing the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean restaurant communities.

Although responses have been limited, CTS has reviewed and thoroughly considered information contained in the completed surveys in developing training workshops for respective restaurant communities. A draft presentation/training module for the Chinese restaurant community has been shared with the Los Angeles County Chinese Restaurants Health Standards Task Force and CTS is awaiting comment as the draft is further refined. Development of a presentation/training module for the Korean restaurant community is continuing and similar presentations/training modules will also be developed for the Filipino, Japanese, Thai, and Vietnamese restaurant communities.

Additional studies on the safety of traditional cultural food preparation techniques

Status – CTS has been in contact with a pre-packaged Mooncake distributor and retailer and is in the process of coordinating laboratory analysis of selected prepackaged Mooncake varieties in order to determine their requisite pH and “water activity” levels. Results of the analysis will be used to determine whether or not those products are considered potentially hazardous foods and at what temperatures the products can be safely stored.

I will provide you with another status report in 90 days. In the meantime, if you have any questions or need additional information, please let me know.

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c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors